

Governance of GMOs in Africa

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Outline

- What do we mean by governance of GMOs?
- National policy instruments and institutions
- Status of explicit measure for governing GMOs: Overview
- Regional Initiatives on GMO governance

What do we mean by governance of GMOs

- The institutionalization and application of administrative, policy and legal measures or actions to ensure the safe development (including testing and release), commercialization (trade, export and import), diffusion and use of genetically modified organisms
- It is the purposeful use of explicit and implicit measures to promote genetic modification for sustainable development

Governance of GMOs

- Should be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage GM in agriculture and other sectors. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and mediate their differences
- Governance is about conflict resolution

National Instruments for Governing GMOs in Agriculture

- Implicit and Explicit Instruments
- Implicit instruments include: Constitutions, STI policies and laws, trade policies and laws, food safety regulations and laws, product standards regulations, environmental regulations and laws, etc
- Explicit instruments are GMO laws and regulations

National institutions

- Dedicated and/or designated institutions e.g. GMO committees, biotechnology institutes and national biosafety focal points
- Non-designated institutions for GMO governance include customs offices, bureaus of standards, environmental agencies, executive departments of government, national parliaments and their committees, courts of law, etc

Status of Explicit Measures for GMO Governance

- At least 16 African countries have explicit regimes for GMO governance. These are Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa

Regional Initiatives on GMOs Governance

- African Union (AU) Biosafety Project
- AU/NEPAD African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE)
- African Biotechnology Biosafety Policy Platform (ABBPP)
- COMESA Harmonization of biosafety regulatory measures and institutional arrangements